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Dutch Economy Favors the Common Man

In 1975 the arable crop farmer working a modern 75-acre farm in Holland will get a lower return for his labor than his own farmhand. This was the conclusion of a survey done by a regional agricultural organization in southwest Holland. It claimed the average farmer would net approximately 15 percent less this year than his hired hand. The authors of the report blame the situation on complete failure of the EC agricultural policy and the lack of a Dutch agricultural policy.

Dutch soldiers fare even better than farm hands when compared with salaries in other European armies. The French conscript, for example, gets only 75 francs per month while his counterpart in the West German army receives 302 francs monthly. The Dutch conscript, a member of western Europe's only unionized army, gets a whopping 885 francs.



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British Pre-referendum Campaign about to Begin

Both pro and anti-EC forces can claim they are ahead as Britain prepares to launch the campaign for the June referendum on whether to remain in the EC. The most significant events of the past week were:

- the introduction of the referendum bill to parliament; debate will begin on April 7;
- the inconclusive outcome of several meetings of the Labor Party and trade union groups have enabled both sides to claim victory;
- the formal opening of their campaign by pro-marketeers.

The referendum bill which provides details of the government's plans for holding the referendum, includes three proposals that differ from those published last month in the white paper:

- the government is willing to allow the vote to be tallied on a county basis rather than on a national basis and the government will allow members of parliament to disregard party discipline on this question. This will satisfy one of the major complaints of the nationalist parties in parliament, which want the vote to be tallied on a regional basis;

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--the parenthetical phrase "Common Market" will be inserted following the term "EC" in the referendum question. The anti-marketeers believe this addition will help their case;

--the government plans to allocate less money to various referendum campaign organizations than originally proposed.

The National Executive Committee of the Labor Party, which met this week to plan its pre-referendum strategy, approved a strong anti-EC resolution but decided that it should be submitted to local party organizations and not to the special party conference to be held on April 26. The committee also approved a statement that calls for complete freedom of choice for party members on the EC issue. Both Prime Minister Wilson and the anti-marketeers claimed that the meeting produced gains for their positions.

The executive committee of the Trades Union Congress apparently decided to continue its opposition to EC membership. The union organization probably will not hold a special conference on the question and this should reduce the potential divisiveness of the issue within the trade union movement. The Congress still has not decided how actively it will campaign.

Meanwhile, the pro-marketeers headed by Home Secretary Jenkins formed the "Britain in Europe" committee--an all-party organization. The group includes such prominent political figures as deputy Tory party leader Whitelaw,

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former Tory head Heath, and Foreign Secretary Maudling. The committee's first job will be to develop a campaign that is vigorous enough to match the momentum already built up by the anti-marketeers.

The latest Gallup poll shows that over 60 percent of the electorate plans to vote in the referendum and that 76 percent professed an interest in whether Britain remains a member of the EC. On the question of whether Britain was right or wrong in joining the EC two years ago, 44 percent said the country was right; 38 percent said wrong.

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